

## step forward with confidence

Accidents due to falls can happen to anyone. But as we age, our risk of falling becomes greater. In fact, one in three older Canadians fall each year and many of these falls occur in their own home while doing their usual daily activities.

That's the bad news. The good news is that many injuries due to falls can be prevented.

The first step to avoiding falls is to understand what causes them. For example, poor balance, decreased muscle and bone strength, reduced vision or hearing, and unsafe conditions in and around your home can increase your chance of falling.

This guide will give you some simple, practical tips about what you can do to stay safe and on your feet.

Your independence and well-being may depend on it!



## stay safe

Your health and well-being are important. Start NOW to make the right lifestyle choices to help reduce your risk of falling.

- **Keep physically active.** Regular, daily exercise helps to improve your balance, increase your flexibility and build your strength.
- **Have your vision and hearing checked regularly by a professional.** Wear glasses or hearing aids as needed.
- **Use medication wisely.** Some prescription and non-prescription drugs can affect your balance and coordination. Avoid mixing alcohol and medications.
- **Eat regular, healthy meals.** You are what you eat. Ask your doctor about getting a copy of the Canada Food Guide.
- **Get up slowly after eating, lying down or resting.** Low blood pressure at these times may cause dizziness.
- **Visit your doctor** every year to assess your health and discuss any recent changes.

## need more help or information?

Veterans Affairs Canada and Health Canada are partnering on a community-based Falls Prevention Initiative to help identify effective falls prevention strategies for veterans and seniors.

To learn more about this Initiative and other matters important to seniors visit...

[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/)

To learn more about Veterans Affairs Canada's health promotion initiatives and other programs and services that are available to veterans, we invite you to contact your nearest Veterans Affairs District Office. You can also visit the Veterans Affairs Canada Internet site at...

[www.vac-acc.gc.ca](http://www.vac-acc.gc.ca)

or Seniors Canada Online at...

[www.seniors.gc.ca](http://www.seniors.gc.ca)

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# you can prevent falls!



## Falls Prevention Information for Veterans and Seniors

## personal items

- Ensure your shoes are comfortable, with good support, low heels and non-slip soles
- Ensure your walking cane is the correct height and rubber tipped for safety

## kitchen

- Store kitchen supplies and pots and pans in easy-to-reach locations
- Store heavy items in lower cupboards
- Use a stable step stool (with a safety rail) for reaching high places



## bathroom

- Use a rubber bath mat. Install it when the tub is dry
- Use grab bars to help you sit and stand
- Install a raised toilet seat and a bath seat when you need one

## stairs

- Ensure stairs are well lit, with light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs
- Install night lights in the hallway



## bedroom

- Ensure the path is clear between your bedroom and bathroom
- Keep the night time temperature above 18°C (65°F). Lower temperatures can reduce body temperature, causing dizziness
- Clutter is risky. Get rid of loose wires and cords and other obstacles, like parcels
- Scatter mats are dangerous. Use only non-slip mats

## exterior

- Keep front steps and walkway in good repair and free of snow, ice and leaves
- Keep front entrance well lit
- Handrails are very important

